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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING
OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 15 November 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Appeal to the Security Council for Humanity launched by the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church at its extraordinary session, held at Centinje, from 31 October to 3 November 1993 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 79, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Appeal to the Security Council for Humanity, launched by the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church at its extraordinary session, held at Cetinje from 31 October to 3 November 1993

At its extraordinary session, held at Cetinje in the Ostrog Monastery (Montenegro, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) from 31 October to 3 November 1993, the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church launches the appeal to the Security Council and all competent figures, institutions and organizations of the international community immediately to abolish the economic sanctions, embargo and isolation of the Serbian people in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), which are unprecedented in history. The comprehensive sanctions and embargo, as they are applied, including the raw materials for the production of medicaments, have turned a whole country into a large concentration camp or a ghetto, and an entire nation - from an unborn child to a man on his deathbed - has became prisoner.

The goods and products in the form of humanitarian assistance (primarily food and medicines) to the population whose existence has been threatened, are exempted from the embargo. Unfortunately, in practice, owing to the time-consuming procedures of the United Nations Sanctions Committee in granting approvals for the import of humanitarian help, and more so, owing to even more stringent application of the sanctions by certain States than envisaged by the Security Council in its resolutions and to the arbitrary and ill-disposed conduct of the border authorities, the foodstuffs and medicines often perish or never reach those whose life depend on them.

Today, all political decisions and the actions of the United Nations and the so-called international community invoke the defence of democracy and human rights. However, gentlemen and brethren, allow us, orthodox bishops, gentle shepherds of Christ's Church, to ask this question: what kind of humanism, democratic ideals and protection of human rights can justify measures which ruthlessly punish an entire nation and, within it, particularly affect the weakest and the innocent - children, the sick and the old - while at the same time failing to reach the culprits? Collective punishment implies the existence of conscious or subconscious belief in collective guilt. We believed that the ideas of collective guilt perished a long time ago, with Hitler and Stalin. Allow us one more question: can the esteemed statesmen who sign resolutions on tightening sanctions sleep well knowing that their signatures will bring not only widespread poverty and starvation to the poorest but also the death of infants in hospitals, immense suffering of mental patients and unbearable situations where doctors cannot help their patients because of the lack of medicaments and equipment?

Meanwhile, the powerful international institutions are turning a blind eye to arms smuggling and are seriously discussing the possibility of lifting the arms embargo for blood- and tear-soaked Bosnia and Herzegovina. Does it not seem like elevating mortals to the rank of masters of life and death of millions of human beings and consequently ascribing to the institutions of man the rights belonging to God alone?

On the basis of the present tragic experience of our people we have to testify before God and the people: such sanctions applied against any country or a people are immoral and inhumane. (It is not only by gun that you can kill a man or a nation. Crime against humanity is not committed only by arms.) Good intentions cannot be realized through evil methods. Our Church and all of us are truly grateful for any kind of humanitarian help from the world, but we cannot help asking this question: at the moment when an entire nation, owing to the errors of domestic and world politicians, is put in the pillory and deprived of any possibility to take care of itself, to live a normal life, to work and to create, doesn't this humanitarian help in itself appear to be an attempt to unburden the conscience and provide an excuse for the international community?

Therefore, if the Security Council is really guided by humanity, which is only natural, we then rightly expect humanity to be translated into action - concretely, in urgent lifting of the inhuman sanctions. Should that not be the case, God forbid, that would certainly undermine faith in the humanity of a new world order, which is being built on the ashes of the inhuman communism, and the human person and community would be ever more threatened.

The civilization devoid of spiritual meaning and true moral values inevitably becomes a source of inhumanity and leads humankind to chaos and hopelessness.

In the name of God and everlasting human dignity, we launch the appeal to humanity to each and every man!